

OUT OF DOORS

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OUT OF DOORS



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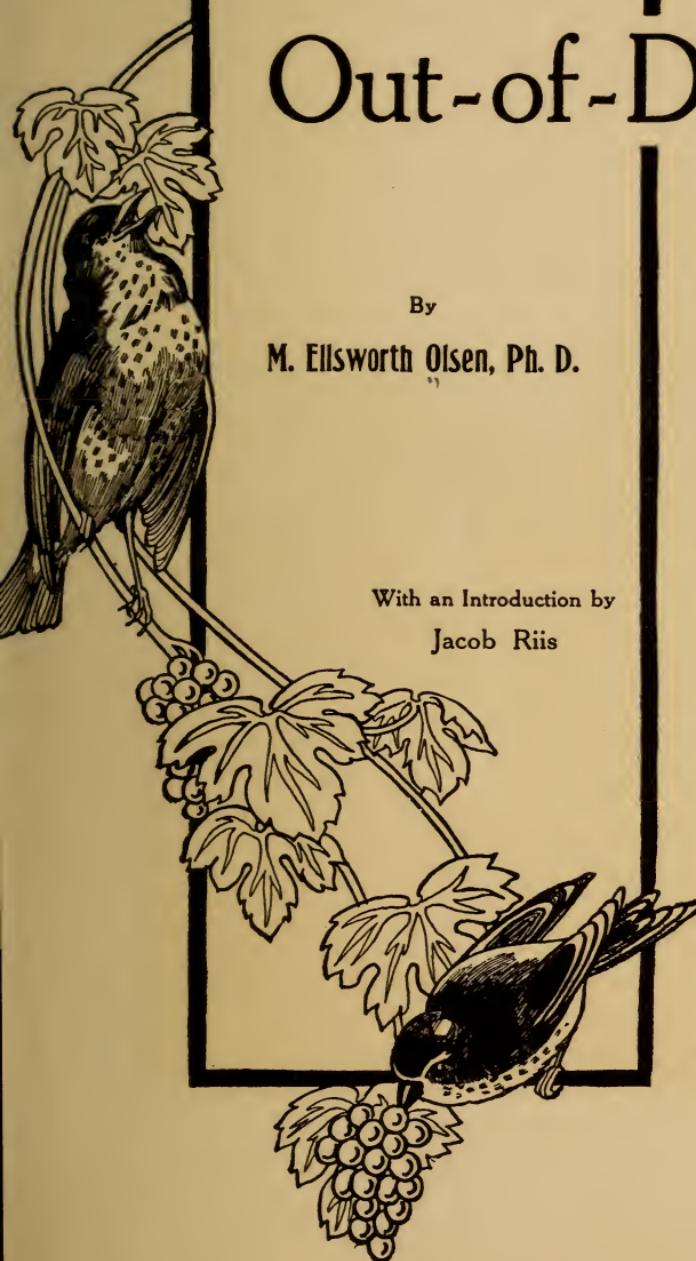
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YOSEMITE FALLS

Height, 2,600 feet



Out-of-Doors

By

M. Ellsworth Olsen, Ph. D.

With an Introduction by
Jacob Riis

Or
The
Open-Air
Spirit in
Relation to
Modern
Life

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*TO THE HONORABLE
THEODORE ROOSEVELT
EX-PRESIDENT OF THE
UNITED STATES*



Introduction

"**T**OO much house" is the key-note of this book. The note is sound. Civilization has been making of the world a hothouse. Man's instinct of self-preservation rebels; hence the appeal for the return to the simple life that is growing loud; hence such books as this that tell plainly what we have been trying to hide and excuse with long pleas for the educational value of play, namely, that the boy is a young animal, that needs to grow a sound body, or all the philosophical fripperies and furbelows we are trying to fit on him will breed down the race, not up. Of course play is educational; it is the business of the boy, and a big part of the business of the man, which we have been forgetting.

Let's out where the winds blow. When your mind gets muddled and sluggish, go dig in the garden and plant something. Everything that grows in my garden has been planted over many times to brace me up. If the clogging up has gone past that, I get me out in the field and the woods with a gun. Kicking through the dry leaves along the hedgerows on a bright frosty morning is a prime cure for that. If it rains, all the better. The man who has never



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been alone in the woods in a rain-storm, or when the snow fell softly and silently, draping all the world in white, has missed something that makes for seeing things straight. He can't afford it.

Too much house. Let's have less of it, more of the wilderness, if that can be; of the open, anyhow. A friend of mine, an old soldier, has a hobby that is worth trying. He wants to see boys drilled in the long vacation by thousands, like an army, out in some forest country where there is elbow-room, the boys who are now shut in the city's stony streets through the long summer heat. He insists that it can be done as easily as an army of men can be maneuvered, and with no more chance of mishap. It is just a question of organization. Let us have it tried. It would make for the nation's defense in more ways than one, all good. For one thing it would pry open a door leading out of the city's slums which all the past has conspired to shut, a door that has got to be opened in our time, lest worse mischief befall.

To every voice that is raised to help the world out-of-doors it is indebted for a lift toward the day of better sense, of common sense.

JACOB A. RIIS.

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CHAPTER ONE

A Sedentary Race



UT - OF - DOORS, under the blue dome of heaven, where the sun shines and the fresh breezes blow, where the grass springs up under foot, and the silent stars look down by night — here amid life's great "primal sanities," with energy, gladsomeness, and health teeming on every side, man had his ancient home. Here he toiled, and here also he enjoyed the fruits of his labors, his wants being few and easily satisfied, his pleasures natural and wholesome.

How different is the pent-up life of our great cities to-day, with its multiplication of artificial wants, its increasing indoor

attractions, its machine methods, and, we may be permitted to add, as a natural consequence, its growing lack of robust manhood and womanhood.

To be sure the outdoor spirit has not entirely left us. We are by instinct and tradition fond of outdoor pursuits. The blood of the brave pioneers who cleared away huge forests, and laid out farms and built cities where was a trackless wilderness, flows in the veins of thousands of our foremost citizens. We also have on our farms to-day a fine type of men and women; and in the smaller cities and villages there is a fair opportunity for open-air recreation and wholesome contact with the soil.

But this notwithstanding, when the nation is viewed as a whole, it must be admitted that outdoor activities do not occupy so large a place in the life of the people as they once did. There is a large and rapidly growing class of young men

and young women whose daily life alternates between close, confining work in shop or factory, and indoor amusements of a more or less debilitating kind. These people work indoors, sleep indoors, and for the most part take their recreations indoors; and they are paying the penalty in loss of physical stamina.

Modern life tends to create a sedentary race. A highly wrought and artificial civilization has led far away from the rugged yet more wholesome conditions of earlier times. Huge smoke-producing factories have taken the place of farm and village workshop; while troops of ugly tenement houses, stealthily advancing, row upon row, are occupying the green fields and smiling valleys that surround our large cities.

In the course of a rapid industrial development, there has been a great demand for factory hands, shop assistants, accountants, and other indoor workers. Farming

has been crowded to the rear as a comparatively unremunerative employment; and the ambitious young men have crowded into the large commercial and manufacturing centers. As a consequence, the proportion of our country's population gaining a living on the land is steadily decreasing, while the cities grow by leaps and bounds; and year by year a larger number of persons are cut off from wholesome contact with nature, and forced to spend their lives in an artificial and health-destroying environment.

Under such conditions physical and mental development must be one-sided. The man who works in a large factory, running a piece of machinery which turns out one thing day after day, tends to become, in spite of himself, a machine-server—a kind of human attachment to the machine which does certain things it can not do itself.* And one who sits at a

*One of the engineering journals records an incident

desk or stands behind a counter in some large commercial house all the day, and spends his nights in a small, ill-ventilated bedroom, is hardly in a better situation, judged from the view-point of what is natural and wholesome.

Not only are the labor conditions unfortunate in themselves, but they also influence the recreation hours. Young people in such an artificial environment are likely to lose their natural, God-given instincts, and fail to employ such spare time as they have in making good by active outdoor exercise of some kind the enforced confinement of their work hours. Too often the need of wholesome recreation is made to yield to a morbid love of excitement; and

which illustrates the over-specialization quite generally prevalent. The manager of a large machine-shop, having occasion to engage a new foreman for a certain department, went outside to find his man, the reason being that among the 120 men in that department, not one had the all-round practical knowledge necessary to undertake the work. Said an employee in the same shop, "I've drilled just so many holes in just that one part for four years, and I've never yet seen the machine that part goes into."

the bodily energies, already severely taxed by the work of the day, are further depleted by the dissipations of the night. The theaters, music-halls, and other popular resorts of our large cities, attract thousands of youths who have spent the whole day indoors, and would profit far more by a brisk walk in the open air or an hour's practise in a gymnasium. It is to be feared that the vast majority of our young men engage in athletics by proxy only; they watch a game of football when they ought to be playing one, and the only exercise they get is in cheering themselves hoarse for the victors.

The sedentary tendencies of the age are without doubt a chief cause of the physical deterioration which is so much discussed in these days. Diseases multiply among us because men's bodies are too feeble to resist them. They have no vitality, no strength of constitution, no downright physical vigor.

"Tis life whereof our nerves are scant,
More life and fuller that we want."

And to get more life we must go where it is dispensed, out under the open heavens. Pills and drafts avail nothing, because they do not get at the root of the matter. Life must be lived on a higher plane, the constitutional vitality must be increased, if a condition of radiant health is to be maintained.

House plants are subject to a number of disease conditions from which plants growing in the open are exempt. So also an indoor, sedentary life brings on an unnaturally delicate state of the body, thus making it an easy prey of the omnipresent microbe. And even if definite diseases are not contracted, there is a general feeling of malaise, a disinclination for work, a sense of physical unfitness, all of which follow naturally from sedentary living. The body needs an abundant supply of oxygen to enable it to do its

work, clear away all wastes, and keep in proper running order; and the natural way to take in oxygen is while engaging in brisk exercise in the open air.

There is a dark side to our much-boasted civilization. To the extent that it has developed the brain at the expense of the body, it has been a curse, not a blessing. Even on its philanthropic side, it has erred fundamentally. There has been plenty of attempted cure, but very little wise prevention. "We are proud of our hospitals," as Lady Henry Somerset once put it, "but we have forgotten to be ashamed of our diseases." We are so often arriving on the scene too late to give the help most needed. The honest working man who is struggling to keep independent and do his share of the world's work, is given comparatively little encouragement. He often lives in a most unwholesome and depressing environment. But let him once become industrially useless or a criminal, and he

will be well housed and well fed at government expense.

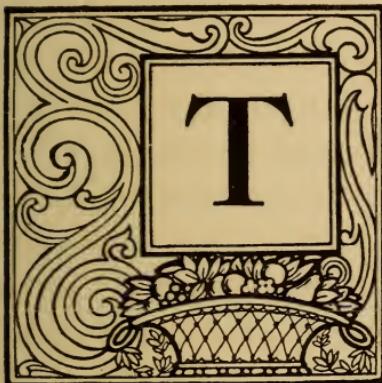
Innocent babes grow up in the slums under conditions which we would not think of tolerating in our workhouses or prisons. Is it at all remarkable that these babies do not long remain healthy? Their lives are often wrecked physically within the first year, and then their mothers carry them back and forth to the hospitals where the professional attention of our foremost medical experts is freely granted them. Are we not by such methods continually putting a premium on disease and pauperism? The healthy child is allowed to grow up in squalor and filth; the diseased child is taken into the hospital, and receives every attention. The homes of the working classes, both in town and in country, are overcrowded and unsanitary. Our insane asylums are palatial affairs. No wonder they keep well filled. Our unfortunate labor conditions, coupled with

wrong habits of living, make for insanity and for all-round race degeneration.

We ought to do something in a national way for *health*; surely it is not enough merely to make provision for *disease*. There is a larger field for our hard-working medical men than they now occupy. We can ill afford to let their knowledge and skill be spent almost entirely in efforts to bring into a tolerable state of repair bodies broken down through wrong habits, bad working conditions, and disease-producing home environment. Why should their services not be brought into play in wise teaching of hygienic laws, and in creating wholesome labor conditions and a health-making environment, as well as in healing the sick?

CHAPTER TWO

The Problem of the Children



HEN there is the problem of the children. A great deal is said of the kind of education they ought to receive. But educators are concerned chiefly with the mental and the moral side of the child. They seem to forget that little boys and girls have bodies as well as minds, and that a really satisfactory educational system should take this fact fully into account. In the writer's opinion, the child of five needs a playground more than he needs books. This would seem to be especially true of the pale-faced little boys and girls now growing up in our large cities. If half the time spent by

these children in brain work were given to physical development, the actual mental progress would be greater. It is to be feared that our present system keeps the children tired and jaded pretty much the whole year. They are martyrs to examinations, high marks, and exhibitions.

The value of book knowledge is so greatly overestimated in these days that we incline to wish, with Thoreau, that a society might be organized for the diffusion of useful ignorance. Certainly we could take a strong, healthy country boy at the age of ten, who could neither read nor write, and give him in four or five years an education which would be for all practical purposes far more useful than that which our children now acquire at such a great cost of bodily vigor in twice the time.

It is only fair to admit that the children of the slums often find their school hours, even though, as we think, they are devoted

too exclusively to mental tasks, more enjoyable than the hours spent in homes so darkened by poverty and drink as to be such only in name.

But if the home conditions of the poor are so unfavorable, is not this an additional reason why we should endeavor to make provision for adequate training, physical and mental, in our public schools?

And the physical defectives are by no means found among the poorer classes only. Medical examination of the school children of Chicago reveals the startling fact that one child out of three is afflicted with some nervous disorder; while two thirds of New York's school children have some physical disability. Is it not, in view of these things, only too evident that there is something radically wrong in our treatment of the children? Has not our view of education been very narrow and one-sided? Have we not been fighting against instead of cooperating with nature?

Is it too much to ask that the object always to be kept in view in any truly national system of education should be the harmonious growth and development of the child, not the attainment merely of an arbitrary standard of proficiency in book knowledge? Ought not the teacher's work to be judged by the health and all-round efficiency of his pupils, rather than by the marks they attain? Should not the examinations, if such are necessary, be real examinations, giving some fair idea of the physical as well as the mental growth of the child, and of his general "fitness"? Ought not the playground to be something more than an overcrowded prison yard? And should not all the children, large and small, have an opportunity to take part in wholesome outdoor recreation? Ought not education, in short, to be a reasonably satisfactory training for real life?

The Playgrounds Association of America is doing a most excellent work in agitating

for the provision, in all our large cities, of a sufficient number of open squares fitted out with swings and divers fixtures for games and recreations, to allow all the children, rich and poor alike, to indulge their instinct for play. The movement, though in its infancy, is having a rapid growth, and is winning general recognition among reflecting people as one of the most important and far-reaching of the various agencies which aim to combat the downward tendencies of city life.

It was a saying of Phillips Brooks that he who helped a child helped humanity with a distinctness, with an immediateness, which no other help in any other stage could possibly match. The divine instinct planted in the heart of every little boy and girl calls for a playground; and there is no stronger condemnation of our twentieth century civilization than the spectacle of little pale-faced urchins trying to make a playground of the dirty and dangerous

streets and noisome alleys in which they are doomed to spend what should be the happiest portion of their lives.

Surely Heaven's choicest blessings will rest upon the men and women who are trying to remedy this great evil, and restore to the child of the slums his natural heritage of sunshine, and fresh air, and space in which to run and play safe from horses' hoofs. It is encouraging to see many of the best people aroused to present-day needs, and impressed with the solidarity of the nation's social interests. The idea that we have done our whole duty by the people of the slums when we have provided them with chapels and Sabbath-schools, is fortunately giving way to a broader conception of the meaning and scope of true Christianity. We are coming to understand that there is a practical side to religion; that it has to do with this life as well as with the life to come; and that there are times when a cup of cold water

will speak more eloquently for the Saviour than a dozen sermons. We are coming to respect the instinct an all-wise Creator has put into the child's heart in order to preserve the race. Perhaps some of us can even sympathize with the poor little tenement invalid who protested, "I don't want to get dead and be an angel,—I want to play first."

The city playground provides a pleasant meeting place for the care-worn mothers. Here they can gather after the hard work of the day, and pass a pleasant social hour while their boys and girls are playing healthful games. We ought to spend our leisure, as far as possible, in the open. Many a nervous woman owes her breakdown largely to being for so many hours daily confined within walls. Out-of-doors there is sunshine for the soul as well as for the body; and the pure air has healing power. What pleasanter sight could we have, in warm summer evenings, than

groups of parents engaged in genial conversation while the little ones pursue their games? And in many of the playgrounds the parents themselves join in the games and amusements, and smooth out their wrinkles, becoming young again by association with their children.

The playground is also valuable as a means of lessening crime. It is the unanimous testimony of the police that where playgrounds are established, the arrests for juvenile crime are lessened. Speaking of this matter in a recent Mansion House meeting, the Lord Chief Justice of England made the significant declaration, "I say without hesitation, after now nearly forty years' work at the bar, and a few years upon the bench, that . . . second to drink and second only to drink, the real cause of crime is the difficulty of finding healthy recreation and innocent amusement for the young among the working classes."

Fortunately the doctrine of total deprav-

ity as applied to childhood is no longer believed; and we are coming to see that even the street urchin responds so warmly and so loyally to the efforts made to meet his needs, that harsh measures are seldom necessary. In fact by far the larger part of the city boy's waywardness is the outward expression of pent-up physical energy. Give him room to move about and exercise his lungs. Give him, too, grass and trees and flowers, and they will exert a quieting, refining influence on his turbulent spirits. There is a world of truth in Mr. Riis's declaration, "I have seen a handful of daisies keep the peace of a whole block better than half a dozen policemen's clubs."

CHAPTER THREE

The Young Man's Needs



NECESSARY to say we should not rest with giving playgrounds to boys and girls. Opportunities for healthy, open-air sports should be granted to the

youth and young men. The country needs a hardier and more virile type of manhood. The vitally depleted cigarette-poisoned weaklings rapidly growing up in our great commercial centers can not maintain a high physical standard for the race.

Physical stagnation is the bane of these young men. They are muscle-bound, short-winded, and susceptible to colds and catarrh. They are not to blame that their work is of a sedentary nature, though some

of them might have chosen better even here; but surely there is no excuse for their leisure hours being generally spent indoors. There should be a strong sentiment in favor of our youth and young men cultivating such open-air pastimes as tend to health and all-round development.

Unfortunately the opportunity to take active part in such fine sports as baseball, golf, and tennis does not come to every young man. We could wish that there were better facilities for young people of both sexes to engage in suitable recreation in the open air. If some of the public money spent in caring for the "unfit" were used in creating a proper environment for the young people now growing up, it would be wise economy in the end.

We admire the superb examples of the human form that the sculptors of ancient Greece have handed down to us, but we are likely to forget that a national system of physical culture would effect as much

for America of to-day as for Greece of the fifth century B.C. Body training was universal in those days; it was a young man's first duty to develop himself physically. Games were not confined to the few; there were no professionals, and no enormous crowds of non-playing onlookers. Opportunities for physical training and competition in the games were open to every citizen, no matter how poor he might be; and the force of public opinion was doubtless sufficient to overcome any aversion to outdoor activity which might be felt by an exceptional person here and there. It is true that among the more favored classes in our own country there is a healthy love of the open air, as well as good opportunity for indulging in outdoor sports; but what we lack is some system national in its scope. At present it is the exceptional man who has an environment favoring good development. The great majority, at least, of the dwellers in our large cities,

are entirely cut off from these health-giving opportunities; and the result can not but tend toward national physical deterioration. We have what is practically a national system of free libraries. Why should we not have free recreation grounds?

While there is urgent need of better facilities for getting out-of-doors, there is also need of a more general use of the facilities already offered. If the young men should save up the money now spent in mild dissipation or at least in questionable forms of amusement, they would soon have a sum sufficient to enable them to join some society or club which offers the desired privileges.*

Judged by its effects on the physique of the race, our twentieth century civilization can hardly be called a success. Modern

* The recreation grounds and gymnasiums conducted by some of the more favored branches of the Y. M. C. A. afford admirable opportunities for wholesome outdoor pastimes, and it is encouraging to see that this side of the activity of a most valuable organization is receiving increased attention in recent years.

life, it has been well remarked, needs a touch of wholesome savagery. The tendency is to softness rather than to hardiness and virility. The fine-clothes occupations are overcrowded. Too many young men are afraid to soil their hands, and would rather be "respectable" than healthy. Physical exertion is distasteful to them, because they have lost the outdoor feeling. Civilization has them in her straight-jacket. Their lives are running in deep ruts, and are becoming daily more joyless and monotonous. These young men need outdoor training, wholesome exposure to the elements, and an opportunity to "rough it" a little. The invigorating breezes of mountain and moor are required to cure the ills of civilization. Mother Nature's help must be invoked if we are to bring up healthy sons and daughters. Whitman struck the nail on the head when he said:—

"Now I see the secret of the making of the best persons;
It is to grow in the open air, and eat and sleep with the earth."

Far be it from the writer to deny the benefits of civilization, which in their way are very great; but civilization is at best a sort of "finishing off" process; it can not create strong men and women. It dresses them, as Thoreau has told us; "it makes shoes, but it does not toughen the soles of the feet." It is not always conducive to the cultivation of the sterner virtues. It can not impart moral stamina, fearlessness, "go." Outdoor life alone does not do this, but it offers a good environment for the development of all that is best and strongest in a man.

We can not afford to overlook the moral side of physical development. Weak, flabby muscles very often go hand in hand with a general flabbiness of character. Sedentary occupation, unless relieved by periods of open-air activity, tends to emasculate men, to render them limp, feeble, invertebrate, in the presence of the stern realities of a business or professional life. Conversely,

outdoor habits help to give firmness of texture to mind as well as muscles, and stay and stamina to the character. The young man who has determined, in Goethe's words,—

"Im ganzen, guten, wahren,
Resolut zu leben," *

must spend some time regularly out-of-doors, where he can take long, deep breaths of life-giving oxygen, and harden his muscles with use. The sickly sentimentalism which destroys so many youths does not flourish in the open, wind-swept fields, but in ill-ventilated living rooms, in crowded music-halls and variety houses, and in the unwholesome atmosphere of cheap novels. How it clears the mind of sickly fancies, doubt, and discouragement to walk out in a stiff March wind! How much easier the perplexing problems of business and of every-day life can be solved when, after

* In the whole, the good, and the true,
Resolutely to live.

vigorous exercise, the blood tingles in every organ of the body, and the whole man is alive to his finger-tips!

Verily Spencer was not far from right when he said that "a good animal" forms the foundation for success in any walk of life. The man of outdoor instincts is on vantage ground in the struggle for existence. He usually has a strong grasp of essential truths, and can often by simple intuition arrive at results that others toil in vain to achieve. Such a one usually carries with him a breezy optimism which is instinct with life and feeling, and wonderfully attractive in a world of anxious, care-ridden toilers.

The outdoor man, too, has staying powers. He has not dissipated his energies in frivolous pleasures, but drawing freely from nature's storehouse, the great out-of-doors, has laid up a generous supply of nervous energy and physical endurance which can be relied upon in times of

emergency. Therefore he is not so easily flurried, and he does not worry. Physical bankruptcy comes not to such a man, for he works with a good reserve on hand. He is the "man of cheerful yesterdays and calm to-morrows."

CHAPTER FOUR

Beauty Culture Out-of-Doors



EAUTY as well as health is the offspring of outdoor life,— a fact which the young woman should not forget. The formative influences of nature, though too subtle to allow of close analysis, are none the less powerful. Wordsworth has given fitting expression to a great truth in those incomparable lines describing the rearing of a natural girl:—

"The floating clouds their state shall lend
To her; for her the willow bend;
Nor shall she fail to see
Even in the motions of the storm
Grace that shall mold the maiden's form
By silent sympathy."

"The stars of midnight shall be dear
To her; and she shall lean her ear
In many a secret place
Where rivulets dance their wayward round,
And beauty born of murmuring sound
Shall pass into her face.

"And vital feelings of delight
Shall rear her form to stately height,
Her virgin bosom swell."

Richard Jefferies has tritely remarked that "it takes a hundred and fifty years to make a beauty—a hundred and fifty years out-of-doors." "Open air," he continues, "hard manual labor or continuous exercise, good food, good clothing, some degree of comfort,— all of these, but most especially open air, must play their part for five generations before a beautiful woman can appear. These conditions can only be found in the country, and consequently all beautiful women come from the country. Though the accident of birth may cause their register to be signed in town, they are always of country extraction."

Active outdoor habits are necessary to

maintain beauty as well as to create it. There is nothing better than a brisk morning walk to give brightness to the eyes and color to the cheeks. Let toilet preparations be used in any quantity, a clear, transparent skin is impossible without sufficient outdoor exercise to maintain a good circulation. If we desire beauty that instead of quickly fading away matures and takes on added richness and depth, we must look to the outdoor girl to furnish it. She alone is in the possession of —

"Health, and the joy that out of Nature springs,
And Freedom's air-blown locks."

Beauty of form, in many ways more important than that of the features, is naturally dependent on well-rounded physical development. The lithe, willowy figure which some young women covet, is not to be attained by tight-lacing, a custom ruinous alike to beauty and to health, but is the result of an outdoor life combined with judicious physical culture. Moreover, vim,

vivacity, and that indescribable *esprit* without which beauty itself is cold and unattractive, spring from a well-developed and naturally vigorous body.

It is a mistake to suppose that outdoor exercise is unnecessary for a young woman whose daily work indoors, perchance in department store or factory, involves physical strain. When one stands behind a counter displaying goods or talking to customers till weary in mind and body, there is a vast difference between such exhaustion and the healthy tiring of the muscles through open-air exercise. The latter prepares for restful, refreshing sleep; not so always the former. No amount of labor indoors, especially in buildings where the ventilation is not the best, will take the place of the morning constitutional or other regular outdoor exercise. On the other hand, activity in the open air will impart solidity and strength to the muscles, and fit them to stand the strain indoors.

While the young woman needs physical recreation in the open as much as the young man, she should be careful to avoid undue exertion. Such games as hockey, tennis, and basket-ball are useful in that they quickly disengage the mind from the accustomed work in school, office, or factory; but there is always some danger in the midst of the excitement which competitive games inspire, of incurring overstrain. It is well to make it a rule, in playing games of any sort requiring physical exertion, to stop short of exhaustion.

For the majority of women, walking is the best and safest all-round exercise. Swimming is a fine second, being admirable as a means of acquiring a good bust development and a graceful carriage. Garden-making also is a delightful recreation, which may well occupy some spare hours during the spring and summer.

CHAPTER FIVE

More Fresh Air and Less Furniture



THE outdoor spirit always tends to greater simplicity. Luxury, harmful luxury at that, is taking stronger hold upon every class of society. Covetousness is a

canker in the lives of both poor and rich. Conventions of all sorts stifle individual conviction and cut off simple-hearted joyousness. "Our expense," as Emerson says, "is almost all for conformity. It is for cake that we run in debt; 'tis not intellect, not the heart, not beauty, not worship, that costs so much."

Our houses are not seldom decidedly overfurnished. Pictures, vases, rugs, and upholstered furniture all have their proper

place; but a plethora of them not only spoils the artistic effect as a whole, but on hygienic grounds makes the home a very objectionable place to live in. Dust and germs accumulate upon such things notwithstanding the best housekeeping, and become a menace to health. Some of these articles, again, are injured by bright sunshine; hence the blinds are drawn, and the room is kept in that dim-lighted and musty condition which encourages the multiplication of disease germs.

There is another side to overfurnishing which is seldom thought of. Some rooms, in spite of fairly good ventilation, still retain a fusty odor due to the number of old things they contain. It is well to remember that upholstered furniture, carpets, rugs, beds, draperies, tapestries, etc., are continually undergoing a slow process of decay, in the course of which they take up oxygen and give off carbonic acid gas. In other words, they pollute the air just the same

as we ourselves do in breathing, only to a much less extent. Moreover, as already indicated, they form convenient hiding-places for enormous colonies of germs, thus offering a serious menace to health. Hence an apartment should have as few articles of furniture as will consist with actual needs, and those such as can easily be cleaned. The free open-air effect which can be attained in this way is really most satisfying to the artistic sense, as well as eminently restful and wholesome.

The air of many working-class houses is polluted by smells emanating from the kitchen. Probably the average housewife does more frying than is strictly necessary. It certainly seems unfortunate on a warm July morning to fill the house with the sickening odor of burnt fat in order to have a meat breakfast, when a meal of poached eggs with bread and fruit would be equally nourishing, and much more pleasant to prepare.

It is one of the greatest anomalies of modern life that after so much has been said by physicians and hygienists of the value of fresh air, the fact remains that a great many people still sleep for perhaps the greater part of the year with tightly closed bedroom windows. We call it sleep, but "stupefaction" would almost be a better term. No wonder many of these victims of self-poisoning feel that they need an "eye-opener" or "pick-me-up" in the morning!

Because we can not see the gases thrown off by the lungs, we are likely to think they are perfectly innocent. They are really in the highest degree noxious. All the blood of the body comes to the lungs to be cleansed, and the fresh air inhaled through the nose necessarily constitutes the cleansing agent. Once used, it may not be used over again without detriment. The air of an ordinary bedroom occupied by two persons would be

rendered unfit for breathing in less than an hour, even assuming that some fresh air might creep in through the crevices; and this foul air grows more stale and foul hour by hour. The cleansing of the blood thus has to be done with an impure agent, and can not be done thoroughly; consequently the body is more or less poisoned.

None of us would think of performing his morning ablutions in the same water for a whole week; and yet such a practise would be far less harmful than this confirmed habit of thousands of otherwise sane persons in highly civilized America of breathing over and over again the foul, used-up air of the average bedroom. The lungs are really excretory organs, and daily throw off quantities of poisonous waste matter. The dust and perspiration that may accumulate on the face are as nothing compared with the deadly poisons given off in the breath.

The question may be asked, "If bedroom atmosphere is so deadly, why do not more people die of it?" The answer is that thousands of deaths are recorded every year which are known to be due mainly to bad air. Consumption alone accounts for something like one eighth of all the deaths, and the chief cause of this disease is acknowledged to be foul air. The all-round physical deterioration which results from depriving the body of a proper supply of oxygen, shows itself in so many and varied forms that it is quite impossible adequately to trace the results of this wide-spread transgression of natural law. Said a well-known physician, "Bedroom climate has slain its tens of thousands."

CHAPTER SIX

"Too Much House"



HE baneful effects of house air are most apparent in the case of savage tribes that have come under the influence of civilization. The American Indians

afford a good example. A century or so ago, while they were living their wandering life, with scarce, uncertain supplies of food, and little shelter, but always plenty of fresh air, consumption was practically unknown among them, and they were a strong, virile race. To-day, with regular and abundant supplies of food, and sheltered in houses provided by the United States Government, the noble red man is rapidly dying out. Among the Sioux

Indians of the Missouri River, sixty per cent of the children are said to be tubercular, and half of those who reach the age of maturity die of the disease.

Some of the Indians, after a short trial, refuse to live in houses. Certain members of one tribe, yielding to the persuasions of the Government agent, moved into a trim row of cottages he had provided; but when he returned some months later he found them all back in their wigwams, the cottages being used as convenient storage places for food and grain. When the agent asked the meaning of this course of action, he was told that the people who went to live in the houses became ill and began to spit blood, but when they returned to their wigwams they soon recovered their usual health. "Too much house," was the laconic diagnosis of one old Indian chief. His words would make an epitaph which might truthfully be inscribed over many graves in our crowded cemeteries.

But we are without doubt making some advancement toward a recognition of the value of fresh air. Medical men, after many years of more or less unfruitful laboratory research, have come to the unanimous conclusion that life in the open air offers the only hope of cure to consumptives. Probably we shall discover in time that this is also the best treatment for some other diseases; in fact, sleeping in the open is now recommended by a number of physicians, especially in the case of sedentary persons who lack bodily tone and vigor.

The writer knows a young man who had become somewhat run down by long hours and close application to business. His medical adviser simply told him to sleep out-of-doors. He accordingly had a porch built for the purpose, fitted with canvas screens so that he could shut off the driving rain and snow, and made it his sleeping place. Living as he did in

one of the northern states, the temperature occasionally dropped to fifteen or twenty degrees below zero; but he had a warm sleeping-bag and woolen cap, and slept better than ever before in his life. He soon began to feel new energy for work. His appetite and circulation improved, and the tired feeling disappeared. His habits in other respects being the same as before, he attributed his renewed health to the floods of fresh, pure air in which he nightly reveled.

It is indeed something for a business man whose work keeps him indoors in a more or less depleted atmosphere all day, if he can sleep under the stars at night. We spend one third of our lives in bed. If for that portion of time we can come into vitalizing contact with the great out-of-doors, it can not fail to give us a definite impulse healthward.

Open air sleeping is coming to be a fairly common thing. In a considerable

portion of the better class suburban homes now building, sleeping porches, at least for summer use, are arranged for as a matter of course. And the movement is only well under way. The time is surely coming when the sleeping porch will be as general as the bath room. The common sense of humanity demands it. Why in all reason should one swelter in a stuffy room, which the midsummer sun, beating down upon it all the day, has raised to almost furnace heat, when just outside the walls the air is cool and pleasant? Our bedrooms on hot nights are veritable torture chambers. Half the enervating effects of the American summer arise from sleeping in hot rooms, which only begin to cool off toward morning, when we are about to leave them. But all this can be obviated by the simple expedient of a sleeping porch; and those who once begin to use one, will find the experience so delightful that they will want to repeat it nightly the year round.

In New York the health officers are introducing into the tenement districts sleeping porches (which, by the way, can easily and cheaply be built on to any house), and find that the consumptive patients sleeping out-of-doors in the heart of the city get well almost as quickly as those who are cared for in the country. While the air in our great cities is by no means so pure as that in the country, it is infinitely better than the air in the ordinary bedroom.

Ex-consumptives who have been cured by open-air methods may be met anywhere, only they can not exchange social visits with quite the same freedom as other people, because they find the atmosphere in most of their friends' houses dangerous to them. In some cases, where their needs are known, the hostess will hasten to open the windows as they are announced. Thus these ex-consumptives are acting as fresh-air missionaries; and

we could do with a great many more of them.

Bad air, it may be said before leaving the subject, is by no means confined to the homes of the people. The atmosphere in some of our churches is fairly sepulchral; railway carriages are often unutterably stuffy; and we are sorry to say that the air in some of our recently built public libraries, especially on crowded Saturday nights, is often stagnant and offensive beyond description. It goes without saying that the air of saloons is bad because of the presence of crowds of people and no proper means of ventilating. Few public halls have a really efficient system of ventilation; and the same is true of factories, stores, and workshops.

CHAPTER SEVEN

The Higher Ministry of Field and Wood



UTDOOR living, moreover, has a bearing on the life of the spirit. Not only do sedentary habits tend to physical decay; they often cause also a benumbing

of the finer sensibilities. The faculty of nature-appreciation, being unexercised, is presently lost; the person is dwarfed mentally and physically. Thus many go through life blind to the marvelous beauties of nature with which this world abounds. They "see not the bright light which is in the clouds;" they hear not the murmur of the wind among the trees, or

the soft patter of rain on the roof. Their hearts are "waxed gross, and their ears are dull of hearing, and their eyes they have closed," "that they can not see." They are depriving themselves daily of some of the chief joys of living. God has scattered beauty with a lavish hand, and in the country there is ever something to call out wonder and admiration. Even in our great cities there are opportunities to satisfy the love of natural beauty. The parks, large and small, contain flower beds and trees and shrubbery, and overhead is an ever-changing sky. A quiet morning walk in one of these public breathing places is a fine preparation for the wearing work of the day. If the heart is susceptible to natural beauty, even the tiniest open square may give—

"A foretaste, a dim earnest, of the calm
That nature breathes among the hills and groves."

Those who are compelled to live in a wilderness of brick and mortar, need es-

pecially to train their senses to note the less striking beauties of nature. Every one can admire a particularly gorgeous sunset; but the delicate shades of pink and blue and gray and amber that may be seen in the west almost any evening go without notice. So also a bright blue sky, bare or flecked with fleecy white clouds, is generally admired; but the steel grays and soft purples and other quiet tints of an ordinary day are unobserved.

To the eyes open to see it, there is a vast deal of simple loveliness in the world. The great Creator has made everything perfect in its kind; and though sin has marred His faultless handiwork, and one sees much now to cause pain and sorrow, yet there is no lack in nature of things to love and admire.

"Still on the seeds of all He made,
The rose of beauty burns."

Nature does not wholly turn away from our vast smoky cities. If we are obliged

to pass our lives in some gloomy tenement district, even there the dewdrops glisten like diamonds in the morning sunshine, the rosy fingered dawn is ours to behold, and the ever changing panorama of the clouds; the sun casts his evening splendor alike over palace and hovel, and the stars look down on us by night with a sweet benediction.

In order to get the best that nature has to give us, we need to cultivate a broad catholicity of taste. It is not good, for instance, to be too exacting of the weather. The day must be of an especially inviting kind if some dainty people are to venture forth. But to a healthy person, with mind and body rightly attuned to nature's harmonies, it is a joy to be out-of-doors in any and all weathers.

Every season of the year offers its own peculiar delights to the nature lover. The crisp, cold air of "winter, bare and hoary," he finds to be a delicious tonic; and the

comparative nakedness of field and wood enables him to study some features of the landscape which are more or less hidden at other times of the year. With the opening of spring, he greets the flowers and birds as they appear, and watches nature's multitudinous, almost feverish activity. The deep, shady woods, the new-mown hay and ripening corn of summer, give joy to every one; and when this entrancing period is followed by the "season of mists and mellow fruitfulness," and —

"Autumn bold,
With universal tinge of sober gold,"

comes on the scene, the interest is only intensified, the harvest-time of the year having a power and pathos that make it second to none. Thus nature continues to charm and instruct all her attentive children.

It is not necessary to travel widely in order to see most interesting things. We may stay where we are; but we must get

our eyes opened. "The whole army of the woods and hedges marches across a single farm in twelve months," writes Jefferies. "A single tree — especially an old tree — is visited by four fifths of the birds that ever perch in the course of that period." "But," adds the same author, "you should know the places in winter as well as in tempting summer, when song and shade and color attract every one to the field. You should face the mire and slippery path. Nature yields nothing to the sybarite. The meadow glows with buttercups in spring, the hedges are green, the woods lovely; but these are not to be enjoyed in their full significance unless you have traversed the same places when bare, and have watched the *slow fulfilment of the flowers.*"

Ruskin, writing of nature in much the same strain, says: "Her finest touches are things which must be watched for; her most perfect passages of beauty are the most evanescent. She is constantly doing

something beautiful for us, but it is something which she has not done before and will not do again — some exhibition of her general powers in particular circumstances, which if we do not catch at the instant it is passing, will not be repeated for us."

There is indeed a whole world of exquisite enjoyment to be had in a living, vital contact with nature. She has something suited to every one's needs; none need turn away empty-handed.

"The air salubrious of her lofty hills,
The cheering fragrance of her dewy vales,
And music of the woods—no works of man
May rival these; these all bespeak a power
Peculiar and exclusively her own.
Beneath the open sky she spreads the feast;
'Tis free to all—'tis every day renewed."

The magnificence of the works of nature would be overwhelming were we not so accustomed to them. Take the stars alone. "One might think," writes Emerson, "the atmosphere was made transparent with this design, to give man, in the heavenly

bodies, the perpetual presence of the sublime. Seen in the streets of cities, how great they are! If the stars should appear one night in a thousand years, how would men believe and adore; and preserve, for many generations, the remembrance of the City of God which had been shown!"

Nature does more, however, than minister to our sense of the beautiful and the sublime. She can teach us spiritual lessons as well. Rightly approached, she leads onward to God.

Said Emerson: "The aspect of Nature is devout. Like the figure of Jesus, she stands with bended head, and hands folded upon her breast." The beauty of nature he regarded as not ultimate, but as the "herald of inward and eternal beauty."

"God writes the Gospel," said Luther, "not in the Bible alone, but on trees and flowers and clouds and stars." Wordsworth believed in nature as a teacher of

spiritual truth. This fact he indicates in the familiar stanza:—

"One impulse from a vernal wood
May teach you more of man,
Of moral evil and of good,
Than all the sages can."

And again:—

"Nature never did betray
The heart that loved her; 'tis her privilege,
Through all the years of this our life, to lead
From joy to joy; for she can so inform
The mind that is within us, so impress
With quietness and beauty, and so feed
With lofty thoughts, that neither evil tongues,
Rash judgments, nor the sneers of selfish men,
Nor greetings where no kindness is, nor all
The dreary intercourse of daily life,
Shall e'er prevail against us, or disturb
Our cheerful faith, that all which we behold
Is full of blessings."

Surely the best thoughts come to us under the open heavens. When we look up to the clear-shining stars, are not our hearts gently yet most mightily drawn out toward purity and holiness? Does it not tend to make us humble and lowly? — yea, lead us to exclaim with David, "When I

consider Thy heavens, the work of Thy fingers, the moon and the stars, which Thou hast ordained; what is man, that Thou art mindful of him? and the son of man, that Thou visitest him?" And can we consider the lilies of the field without being drawn closer to the God who clothes them in those robes of purest white, and who has promised also to clothe man, who was created in His image?

What Stevenson said of a cathedral is eminently true of nature—it sets a man to preaching to himself. Alone in the woods many a troubled soul has heard and responded to the call to a higher, holier life. Communion with nature contributes to that poise, that sense of reserve power, which is so necessary to great action; it helps one to turn aside from trivialities and concentrate on essentials. It kindles noble aspirations, and imparts that robust vigor of mind and body so necessary to translate them into action.

Also to the wounded, grief-stricken soul there comes a measure of relief in the healing calm of nature. Sorrows lose their sting in the open air, and thus become more bearable. "The sweet and solemn influence which comes to you out of the noontide or the midnight sky," wrote Phillips Brooks, "does not take away your pain, but it takes out of it its bitterness. It lifts it to a higher peace. It says, 'Be still and wait!' It gives the reason power and leave and time to work. It gathers the partial into the embrace of the universal. It fills the little with the large. Without mockery or scorn, it reminds the small that it is small. The atom floating on the surface hears deep calling unto deep below, and forgets its own restlessness and homelessness in listening."

Jefferies writes eloquently of the largeness, freedom, and joy one finds under the open heavens. "Step aside," he bids, "from the trodden footpath of personal experience,

throwing away the petty cynicism born of petty hopes disappointed. Step out upon the broad down beside the green corn, and let its freshness become part of life. The wind passes, and it bends—let the wind, too, pass over the spirit. From the cloud-shadow it emerges into the sunshine—let the heart come out from the shadow of roofs to the open glow of the sky. High above, the songs of the larks fall as rain—receive it with open hands. Pure is the color of the green flags, the slender pointed blades—let the thought be pure as the light that shines through that color. Broad are the downs and open the aspect—gather the breadth and largeness of view. Never can that view be wide enough and large enough, there will always be room to aim higher. As the air of the hills enriches the blood, so let the presence of these beautiful things enrich the inner sense. One memory of the green corn, fresh beneath the sun and wind, will lift up the heart from the clods."

This wholesome spiritual uplift which comes from the fields and the woods is especially needed in an age like the present, when commercial greed threatens to sap the very foundations of society, and the lives of the many alternate between the grinding, monotonous toil necessary to eke out a living, interrupted now and then by exciting amusements which are hardly less wearing upon the bodily energies than the work itself. The modern young man lives altogether too fast a life. He doesn't have time to get acquainted with himself. If he has a spare moment, he whips out a novel from his pocket, or he eagerly scans the close-printed columns of a daily newspaper. The rage for news is a veritable disease. "Hardly a man takes a half-hour's sleep after dinner, but when he wakes he holds up his head and asks, 'What's the news?' as if the rest of mankind had stood his sentinels."*

* Thoreau.

It is well now and then to follow the example of a certain patriarch, of whom we read, "And Isaac went out to meditate in the field at the eventide;" or the divine counsel, "Be still, and know that I am God." We often gain time by stopping to think. The genial author of "*The Simple Life*" wisely says:—

"He who knows not how to halt, knows not how to march, or to profit by his marches. He must sometimes sit down, look behind and before him, recall and foresee, consider his strength and his time, and listen to that which the blades of grass, the ants, the birds, say to the traveler as he pauses for an instant. He must sit down to perceive, through the sounds and forms of things which pass, the voice of God and the whisper of the soul."

It is no loss of time to pause now and then amidst life's busy activities in order to commune with nature. The distinguished exponent of the strenuous life is

a man of confirmed outdoor habits. When Ex-President Roosevelt wishes to be alone, we are told, he "dons a flannel shirt, shoulders an ax, and betakes himself to some secluded spot where there are trees to fell." Gladstone also loved to make chips fly. In general, the more arduous the daily toil, the greater the need of these seasons of withdrawal to be alone with nature, and drink in fresh vitality at every pore.

CHAPTER EIGHT

Around the Camp-Fire



SUMMER spent under canvas is perhaps the nearest approach to an absolutely ideal vacation that can be imagined. To camp by a running stream is indeed the experience of a lifetime. It brings one into sympathetic touch with nature as almost no other form of recreation. It gives freshness of soul, a renewing of all the powers of mind and body. Verily there is nothing like it to make one young again. What a delightful picture Stevenson has given us:—

"The bed was made, the room was fit,
By punctual eve the stars were lit,
The air was still, the water ran;
No need there was for maid or man,

When we put up, my ass and I,
At God's green caravanserai."

Camping is in itself a whole education in the fundamentals of right living. No better means could be found of showing how few and simple are the actual needs of mankind. It has been suggested that a law should be passed requiring every young man to spend two summers in a tent as part of his life training before reaching the age of twenty. The idea is eminently suggestive. Let us, even at the risk of seeming to digress, enlarge upon it a little. Is there not the best of reason for our legislative bodies to do something to offset the unfortunate industrial conditions which make for the destruction of hardness and stamina in our young men? What could possibly be a more beautiful spectacle to the true patriot than to see year by year thousands of young men who had arrived we will suppose at the age of seventeen, gathering together in

camps for vigorous training in the open air, and to listen to practical health lectures by some of our foremost physicians? How it should gladden the hearts of these men who spend so large a part of their energies in more or less fruitless endeavors to renovate broken-down, diseased bodies, to meet face to face the flower of the country's youth, to hold up before them wholesome, manly ideals, to warn them against vice and all enervating habits, not mincing matters, but calling a spade a spade, and plainly showing the baleful harvest which follows the sowing of wild oats.

Such holiday camps should include opportunities for engaging in all manner of wholesome sports, as well as physical culture drills calculated to correct any tendencies to flat chests and round shoulders. Moreover there could be plenty of marching and countermarching. The young men would be under discipline, and would learn how to move in bodies large and small

with military precision. Their endurance should be tested by forced marches. They could learn to handle the spade and the pickax, and to perform all the duties necessary to defense of one's country except actual shooting. Health, hardiness, and all-round physique should be the things chiefly aimed at in these camps. These may properly be required, because they are essential to good citizenship. Shooting ability is doubtless necessary in actual war; but if the country's youth are strong and hardy, with reasonably good all-round development, it will not take them long to learn the use of the rifle when their services are required in the fighting line.

Of course the training need not be confined to two or three weeks' camp life in the summer. It would naturally be followed up by a home program consisting of gymnasium practise, walking and running, and all healthy outdoor sports, as well as a wholesome observance of physio-

logical laws in such matters as food, drink, and ventilation.

The value of such training would be far-reaching. Not only would the country enjoy an added sense of security from the knowledge that its able-bodied young men were keeping themselves in a fit condition physically, so that in time of threatened invasion they could, on very short notice, take their places in the fighting ranks; but in all the various walks of life better work would be done as a result of the more general prevalence of robust health and vigor.

If people only camped out occasionally, they could hardly help discovering that night air is not such a dreadful thing after all, and an open window need not give one his death of cold. They could learn some of the advantages of the simpler life.

To the veteran outdoor man, whose bedroom is lighted by the stars, the close air and so-called comforts of a modern house

are anything but desirable. An old Gipsy was once asked if he did not think he would like to spend his remaining years in a house. He replied that as he was getting pretty old, and his chest was none too strong, he could not undertake such a risky experiment. "A young Gipsy," he thought, "might manage it, perhaps, and seem none the worse for it; but not a man of eighty-four."* Would that more of our old men shared with this child of nature his apprehensions of the dangers of confinement in a house!

Camping is unsurpassed as a pleasurable outing for the family. It has that flavor of romance which captivates boys. It gives them the taste of wholesome primitive life which their strong, sturdy natures crave.

The American correspondent of one of the London dailies recently reported a night picnic which Ex-President Roosevelt

* "The Tramp's Handbook," by Harry Roberts.

enjoyed with his sons and three of their friends:—

"As soon as a log fire was burning brightly, the evening meal was cooked and yarns were spun, the President telling an enraptured circle of boys a series of thrilling hunting stories. The weather was delightful, a silvery moon remaining in the west till the log fire burned low, when, wrapping themselves in blankets, the campers composed themselves to slumber. . . .

"At sunrise next morning the fire was relit and breakfast cooked. The camp was then broken up, and the party returned at an early hour to Sagamore."

Perchance some men may think it a little undignified to sit round a campfire with the boys. We reply that it is a cheap kind of dignity that depends upon the frock coat and the silk hat. Moreover, the best men keep fresh and young in heart by unbending themselves on occasion. "A

full-grown man!" exclaims the author of the delightful "Outdoor Papers." "There is not a person in the world who can afford to be a full-grown man through all the twenty-four hours. There is not one who does not need, more than he needs his dinner, to have habitually one hour in the day when he throws himself with boyish eagerness into interests as simple as those of boys."

If more fathers of to-day made chums of their boys and joined them in an occasional outing of this kind, it would go a long way toward solving the boy problem. Even the modern boy is by instinct something of a savage, and many of his troubles arise from the difficulty he finds in adjusting himself to an unwholesome and artificial environment. The boy is always nearer to the heart of nature than the grown-up man; he has a passionate love of the open air and of the fields and woods; he is never really happy indoors. Nature has planted

this outdoor instinct in the boy's heart for the good of the race; and when we try to stamp it out and make our boys fine drawing-room creatures, we strike a blow at the national health.

Of course the boy needs training, but not the kind of training which seeks to crush his God-given instincts. He must learn to respect the laws of society; but if he is given to understand that these laws of man go directly contrary to the divine laws in the form of instincts which nature has planted within his breast, what wonder that he rebels!

We are wont to deplore the increase of cigarette-smoking and other bad habits among the boys, but the remedy lies near to hand. If fathers would make comrades of their sons, give their sturdy natures free vent in natural channels, and then at the proper time take pains to explain to them why smoking is bad for a growing lad, they would in most cases be rewarded with

cheerful obedience. The boy has a loyal soul, and when he feels that he is understood, places implicit confidence in "father." But he also has a keen sense of justice, and very naturally displays a spirit of open rebellion when confronted with prohibitions on every side.

To return to our subject, camping has proved to be a thoroughly enjoyable mode of spending the holidays. The cycle camper will carry on his wheel a tent, ground sheet, and sleeping-bag, and all other necessaries of camp life which modern inventive genius has supplied in such light and portable form. He is free to pitch wherever he pleases, on the breezy cliff overlooking the sea, or by some flowing stream, or, with the kind permission of the farmer, perchance in an orchard all in blossom. One day he is in this county, to-morrow fifty miles away; and he knows nothing of the stuffy rooms and unwholesome beds of public inns. No wonder he

derives from this intercourse with nature a benefit that others seek in vain in the conventional holiday resorts.

Family camping is hardly less interesting. The children take naturally to camp life. The open-air instinct is strong in infancy. Fretful babies become quiet and contented when allowed to be out-of-doors. Delicate little girls become strong; pale, sunken cheeks fill out and take on a rosy hue, and weak, flabby muscles become firm. The open air is nature's panacea for the delicate child. Careworn mothers, with overwrought nerves, get hardly less pleasure from such a holiday than the little ones; while the business or professional man finds it much easier to cast off weariness and perplexities in the delightfully free and unconventional atmosphere of a camp than in the best of seaside lodgings.

It has been truly remarked that the man who built the first house has much to answer for. Certainly living in houses has

not tended to simplicity and free-handed hospitality. When men took to building houses that they could bolt and bar, they at once began filling them with things that they did not really need, and luxury grew apace. The modern man is fairly smothered with his so-called comforts; his life is largely spent in getting things he can never truly use, and guarding them from his fellows. Camp life exemplifies the doctrine of simplicity and of dignified leisure; it gives one time to think a little. The camper need take no account of the hours. He says with Thoreau:—

"It shall be what o'clock I say it is."

Away from the bustle and turmoil of life, he breathes nature's healing calm. Day and night teach him their lessons. He absorbs health, freshness, and strength at every pore, and is made over again mentally and physically.

"Caravanning," another excellent form of outdoor recreation, has so much in common

with camping, that it needs but few words here. The caravan should be strong and durable, elegant in its simplicity. Any trace of luxury in appointments or over-elaborateness in structure is fatal to the best artistic effect of an open-air vehicle of this kind, and out of harmony with the spirit of the outdoor life. It also detracts from the simple-hearted enjoyment of the users. If we are to carry all our conveniences with us, we might as well stay at home. There is little satisfaction in holiday-making unless, in some degree at least, we have learned how to "rough it."

In the absence of a regular caravan, a covered wagon will serve every necessary purpose; and where the progress is leisurely, several days or even a week being spent in pleasant spots along the road, it will be the cheapest plan, when the time comes to move on, to hire a horse to pull the wagon to the next stopping place. The free, unconventional life in the open air

and in the most pleasing surroundings, which is possible while taking this kind of vacation, is far more restful and pleasing than the artificial life at a seaside resort, and will send one back to work refreshed in mind and body, and with a keener feeling for the beautiful things in nature of which our country has so large a share.

CHAPTER NINE

"The Long Brown Path"



F caravanning and camping are good, what shall we say of that finest of all outings, the walking tour? It is the oldest, most generally approved form of taking a journey, and yet it never grows stale. It is very common among the students of German universities, who with knapsack on back climb the mountains and explore the woods and valleys, not only of their native country, but of the more remote parts of Europe as well. We could wish that this *Wanderlust* might seize upon the young men of America. What with trolley-cars and bicycles and automobiles, walking bids fair to become one of the lost arts.

Americans are notoriously afraid of using their leg muscles. We never walk when we can ride. This is probably one reason for our numerous nervous breakdowns. Our English cousins vastly outstrip us as pedestrians. Rare old Ben Jonson, in "the spacious times of great Elizabeth," footed it from London to Scotland. Wordsworth composed some of his best poetry while climbing the hills of his beloved Cumberland; Keats, Shelley, and Tennyson were all fond of "the long brown path." Dickens thought nothing of a twenty-mile walk before breakfast. Hazlitt has written such a delightful essay on walking, that we must quote a few lines. "Give me," he writes, "the clear blue sky over my head, and the green turf beneath my feet, a winding road before me, and a three hours' march to dinner—and then to thinking! It is hard if I can not start some game on these lone heaths. I laugh, I run, I leap, I sing for joy."

But walking is not exciting enough for the pampered young people of to-day. The good walker must be simple-hearted, cheerful, joyous; he must, as Burroughs has said, be capable of amusement on a low key. His senses should be sufficiently alert to read the messages which nature is sending him from every field and bush. He must take a hearty delight in all living things.

Walking is probably the best all-round cure for the ills of civilization. If the jaded society people were to take resolutely to pedestrianism, they might find life once more worth the living. "Think," writes Burroughs, "how the stones would preach to them by the wayside; how their benumbed minds would warm up beneath the friction of the gravel; how their vain and foolish thoughts, their desponding thoughts, their besetting demons of one kind or another, would drop behind them, unable to keep up or to endure the fresh

air. They would walk away from their ennui, their worldly cares, their uncharitableness, their pride of dress; for these devils always want to ride, while the simple virtues are never so happy as when on foot."

The walking habit would probably do more than any other one thing to dispel the moral listlessness, the feeling that life is hardly worth while, the sense of disillusionment almost approaching cynicism, which has crept into modern society, and threatens to undermine the usefulness of many of our young men. Somehow the fresh air and the sunshine and the twinkling stars insist on telling us that life is worth the living, and that we may hope for something still better beyond the grave.

Entirely apart from its bracing moral effect, walking is regarded by physicians as one of the very best kinds of exercise; it improves appetite and digestion, stimulates a sluggish liver, strengthens a weak

heart, renders the muscles supple and the skin active, and imparts tone and vigor to the nervous system. "Get a pedometer and walk," was the brief but effective prescription given a worthy statesman whose weight had insisted on climbing steadily up the scale while his strength as rapidly went down.

As a wholesome, economical, and thoroughly interesting mode of spending one's holidays, we know of nothing to equal the walking tour. Given good shoes, a strong, easy-fitting suit of clothes, and a knapsack with a few essentials, what more could a healthy young man ask? Has he not taken out his emancipation papers? Is not the world at his feet?

In Whitman's inimitable words:—

"Afoot and light-hearted I take to the open road,
Healthy, free, the world before me,
The long brown path before me leading wherever I choose.
Henceforth I ask not good fortune, I myself am good fortune;
Henceforth I whimper no more, postpone no more, need
nothing.
Done with indoor complaints, libraries, querulous criticisms,
Strong and content I travel the open road."

Coming back from such a vacation spent on the open road, the young man will have more than a ruddy complexion, good digestion, and well-hardened leg muscles to show. His inner life will have been enriched. The memory of deep, mysterious woods and sunlit valleys will linger about him; a sweet aroma of nature, like the fragrance of flowers, will continue to envelope him, even in the smoky city. From his communion with the great out-of-doors, he has gathered sanity and health to take him over some dreary stretches of monotonous drudgery in shop or factory. He has caught glimpses of a better world, and no longer toils hopelessly. Henceforth he only *sojourns* in the city; he *lives* in the country, because, though miles of dusty pavements intervene, his heart is with the fields and the woods.

For those unable to command sufficient leisure to take a walking tour, there is the countryside ramble, which affords at the same time wholesome exercise for the body



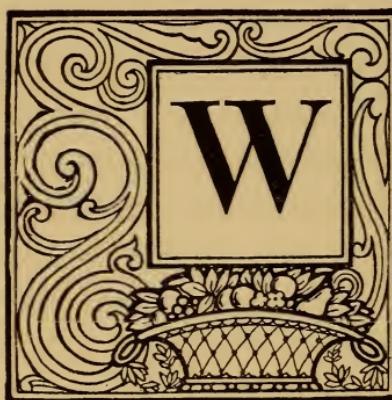
and an opportunity to observe the habits of plants and birds. It is a sad commentary on our educational system that hardly one person in ten can distinguish the songs of the most common birds, or recognize them at sight. We are as strangers in our own country, because our studies have been so largely confined to books, and we have not cultivated the faculty of observation. Walking lends itself admirably to nature study, and loses none of its value as exercise when connected with the pursuit of some hobby, such as botany, zoology, or photography.

Some young men are so situated that they must spend the whole day in confining work indoors. Such will find a walk by starlight thoroughly enjoyable. During the gloomy winter weather the evening walk will be almost as pleasant as one taken in the middle of the day. The noisy street traffic has largely subsided, but many of the shops are brilliantly lighted up, and

the general effect is bright and pleasant. A brisk walk of three or four miles will clear the brain of idle worries, quicken the circulation, and prepare for a good night's rest.

CHAPTER TEN

Back to Nature and the Soil



WHO does not take delight in a garden? There is something about growing flowers and plants that exerts a kind of fascination over the human mind.

Day after day we see new beauties unfold; the glories of creation are reenacted before our wondering eyes. And what subtle healing power seems to spring from the soil! What freshness of mind and vigor of body! Verily many an invalid has sought health in vain till he was willing to dig for it.

Said Emerson, "When I go into my garden with a spade, and dig a bed, I feel such an exhilaration and health, that I

discover that I have been defrauding myself all this time in letting others do for me what I should have done with my own hands."

There is indeed a solid satisfaction in making one's own garden, even to the inclusion of the heavier work, which is so often relegated to hired help. Somehow useful work in connection with the soil seems to give more lasting pleasure than that afforded by athletics. Man has natural affinities with the soil; he was meant to be a gardener.

Tolstoy, even at his advanced age, does some work daily on his farm. He keeps in trim for his arduous literary labors by exercising his muscles in the open air. If brain workers generally adopted this plan, they would not suffer so much from mind weariness, and there would be fewer breakdowns from what is called overwork, which nearly always means underwork so far as the muscles are concerned.

Farming and gardening are especially good for us because they afford wholesome exposure to the elements. They toughen the skin, harden the muscles, and give a much-needed physical stamina. The tendency of city life is to pamper the body, and render it soft and delicate. It is a far cry to the sturdy Highland chief who, camping one night with his men, went and kicked from under his son's head the snow which the youth had formed into a sort of pillow, angrily declaring that "the young rascal, by his degenerate effeminacy, would bring disgrace on the clan." But it was the rough, strong men of this type who laid the foundations of America's greatness; and the future welfare of the country will depend on whether it can continue to rear hardy sons and daughters. The culture which is not virile is a failure. The nation that shuns physical toil, will sooner or later give way to its betters. Ancient Rome lost its empire when it lost its imperial race.

The exodus to the cities is a symptom that can not but cause alarm. It has been well said that the modern city is the despair of the political economist. Its labor market is an exceedingly uncertain one. With its prison-like factories, its gloomy, comfortless tenements and noisome slums, it seems an infernal contrivance for weakening and destroying the race.

But while labor conditions are bad, they are not hopeless; and we must look to the young men now growing up, to better them. They will need to begin by taking themselves in hand. Wholesome outdoor habits lie at the root of success in life. It should be the ambition of every young man and young woman to attain the highest possible degree of physical efficiency.

"Young man, go west," was the sage advice given to the ambitious youth of a former generation. We should like to say to the sedentary race now growing up: Young man, young woman, get out-of-

doors. Get back to nature. Cultivate the closest possible acquaintance with the soil. Shun enervating habits and every kind of dissipation. Don't waste your eyesight on cheap novels. Read wholesome outdoor books by such men as Jefferies, Burroughs, Thoreau, Higginson, Roosevelt, and others, and get acquainted with the beautiful world in which you live, and the manifold activities of plant and animal life. Eat only wholesome food; keep regular hours; value the sweet weariness which follows useful toil. Play as many games as you can; leave other men to do the looking on.

Better still, get the play spirit into your daily work; put zest and interest and whole-hearted enjoyment into every task you undertake. Said a prominent physician whose friends remonstrated against his long hours of professional toil, "My work is nine tenths play; hence it does not wear on me, in fact I enjoy every hour of it."

"Give us, oh, give us the man," said

Carlyle, "who sings at his work. . . . The very stars are said to make harmony as they revolve in their spheres. Wondrous is the strength of cheerfulness, altogether past calculation its powers of endurance. Efforts to be permanently useful must be uniformly joyous — a spirit all sunshine — graceful from very gladness — beautiful because bright."

Walking is better than physic; so do not be sparing of shoe-leather. If your health is indifferent and you have been dosing yourself with patent medicines, you must stop all that. Get weaned from the bottle. Seek your health in the open air. Shun valetudinarianism as you would the plague; on no account coddle yourself, but endeavor by wise adherence to physical laws to become healthier and hardier every day.

Remember that nature is yours to enjoy; the woods and fields and glorious morning air are your ancient heritage. For you the grass grows and the trees put forth buds

and blossoms; for you the birds tune their cheerful lays and the cattle browse in the meadows, while the sun shines warm overhead. Your work hours may have to be spent in the spirit-deadening surroundings of shop or factory; but your leisure hours should find you out under the open heavens in city park if not in the country, taking long, deep breaths of life-giving oxygen, and enjoying the sights and scenes of nature.

Your longer holidays should see you, not lolling in an easy chair at some conventional boarding-house or seaside resort, but out in the open air, perchance footing it over hill and dale with knapsack on back, or boating on river or lake, or camping by the running brook, or helping some farmer to gather in the golden grain—doing something that will harden the muscles, increase the breathing capacity, refresh the mind, deepen the insight into the beauty and meaning of natural laws, and thus directly or indirectly fit you for larger usefulness.

As you thus cultivate a healthy outdoor spirit, and seek to encourage it in others, you will be doing something to stem the tide of physical deterioration, and to build up a nation pure, strong, and virile, loving freedom, powerful in defense of the right, and beautiful in its manhood and womanhood.

Health and Nature Books

Ministry of Healing A beautiful and helpful presentation of Christ's example in relieving humanity of its spiritual and physical ills. Beautifully illustrated. Cloth, 544 pages, price \$3.00.

Practical Guide to Health By Frederick M. Rossiter, B. S., M. D. A masterly treatise on Anatomy, Physiology, and Hygiene, with a scientific description of diseases, their causes and treatments; specially designed for the home and for the instruction of nurses. Cloth, 659 pages, price \$3.50.

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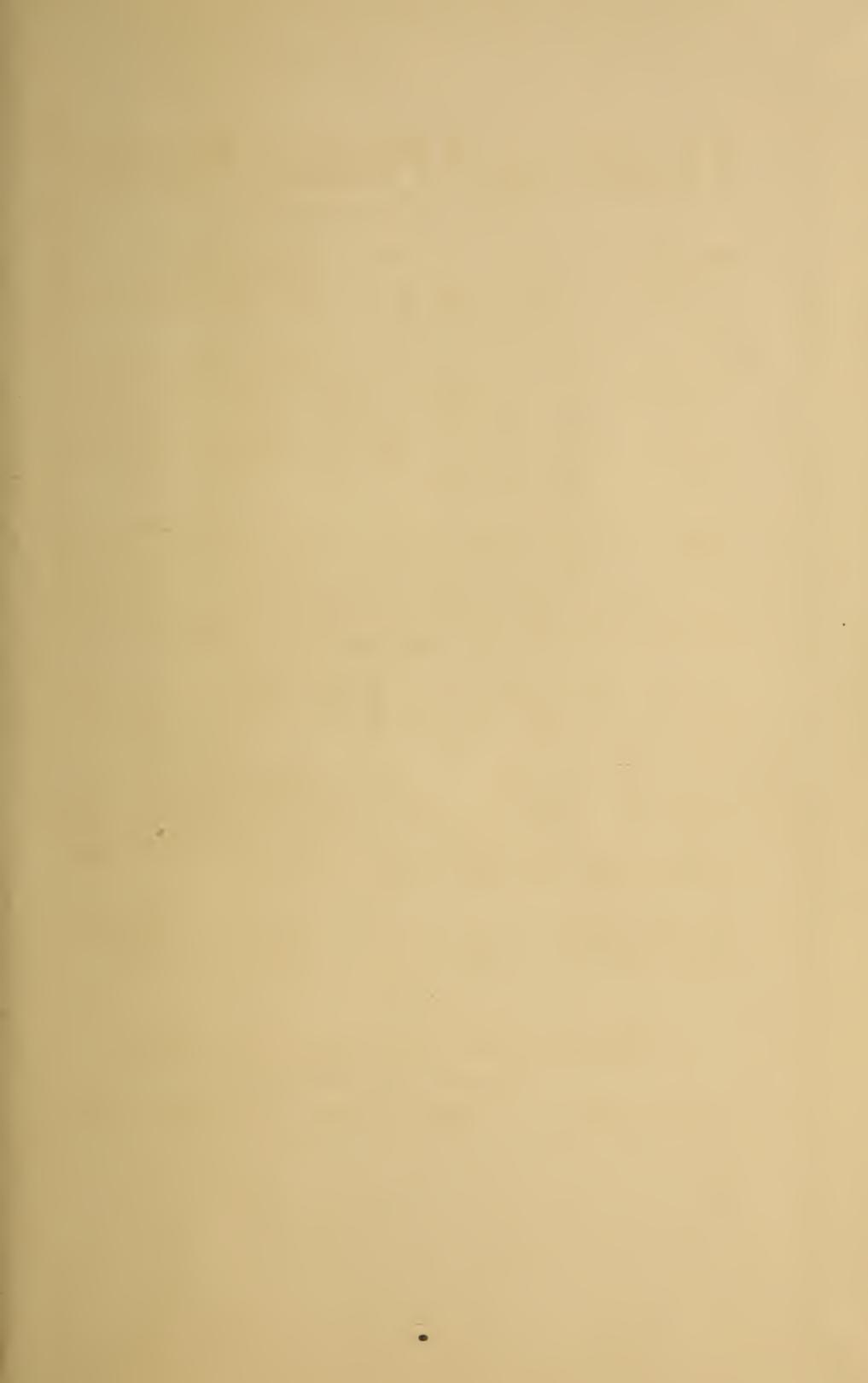
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